my brothers and my queen by Idhren15

Series: Linked Universe Collection [7]
Category: The Legend of Zelda & Related Fandoms
Genre: Battle, Blood and Injury, F/M, Fluff and Angst, Friendship, Gen, Linked Universe (Legend of Zelda), Love Confessions, Near Death Experiences, Sign Language, Sleepy Cuddles, Violence, Warriors (Linked Universe)-centric, yep i attempt to write fight scenes XD
Language: English
Characters: Artemis (Linked Universe), Impa (Legend of Zelda), Legend (Linked Universe), Linked Universe Ensemble, Sky (Linked Universe), Time (Linked Universe), Twilight (Linked Universe), Warriors (Linked Universe), Wild (Linked Universe)
Relationships: Artemis/Warriors (Linked Universe), Time & Warriors (Linked Universe), Warriors & Wild (Linked Universe)
Status: Completed
Published: 2021-03-17
Updated: 2021-03-17
Packaged: 2021-09-15 21:22:21
Rating: Teen And Up Audiences
Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply
Chapters: 1
Words: 6,369
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

The gang arrive in Warriors' Hyrule, and the captain realises there's something he's been putting off for too long.

He has to tell a special someone how he feels... before it's too late.

my brothers and my queen

Author's Note:

- For fuwafuwallen.

  This is for my dear friend Allen! I tried to combine the tropes you like - Wartemis, Wild&Wars bonding, and fluff with a nice dose of angst as well :D

  ily bro. have a wonderful day <3

Warriors pauses before the dark portal, and turns back to the warm, loving home that has sheltered them the past week, until Hylia called them elsewhere. The majority of the heroes have already walked through, with a certain air of reluctance to leave this momentary peace.

Now it is only Warriors, and Time, who wait, and the former does so for the latter.

Time has his wife wrapped in his arms, and kisses her gently. He pulls back a little, enough to whisper promises and thanks in her ear. Malon smiles, but her cheeks glisten, and Warriors knows that the tears will really fall once they've all left.

The pain of being separated, from someone you truly love, is a pain he is unfortunately familiar with.

It's a pain that he ignores, that he pushes down and convinces himself, he's being silly. But he's starting to recognise things in others - in the way Sky gushes about Sun, and now seeing Time and Malon together - and he knows, that when he returns home, he has a confession to make.

He's been dodging that sword for far too long.

The portal starts to flash, a deep purple, and Warriors yelps as he's suddenly pulled towards it.

"We're going, we're going!" he yells, then manages to twist his head to look at the couple.

"Time!"

He hates having to separate them, but it's better that Time says goodbye and walks away from this, rather than having the magic of the portal force him away.

Warriors turns back to face the portal, giving the couple privacy to say their last goodbyes, until they meet again - whether it be on this journey, or afterwards, when Hylia's mysterious purpose has been revealed and they have saved the worlds across time... or whatever they are supposed to be doing.

"Alright. Let's go," Time says then, coming up behind Warriors. He nods and steps through, the older following close behind. There is the strangest sensation of falling, and spinning, and being thrown up in the air, all at once, and it leaves Warriors dizzy and stumbling as the portal spits them out into another world.

"There you are," Legend grumbles, "Thought you were never coming."

Warriors scowls in the direction of the veteran's voice, his vision dark and blurry after the switch.

"I'm glad we're all here now," Twilight says, "but does anyone recognise this place?"

A chorus of "no"s ring out, and Warriors rubs at his eyes furiously, trying to clear the last of the fog.

"Wait… I think I do," Time mutters.

Warriors' heart soars, because as far as he knows, the only other world that Time would recognise is…

He blinks, and his vision clears, to the beautiful sight of open fields, and the castle not so far away.

"This is my Hyrule!" he exclaims, "Come on, we should go to the castle!"

His heart is pounding, and he tells himself that it's because of the thrill of being back in his home world, walking across patchy fields and seeing the small shoots of life breaking through the burnt and blackened soil.

It's *not* because their destination is the castle, and he knows *who* awaits them there.

Warriors sets off with only a little weakness in his stride, the others all falling into step behind him, except Wild, who hurries to walk beside the captain.

'Beautiful,' the younger signs, and gestures to the healing fields around them.

"Yes," Warriors smiles, "It *is* beautiful, how life finds a way to grow, even after the ruins of war."

Wild nods, a slightly distant look in his eyes, likely thinking back to his own Hyrule, a perfect example of what Warriors speaks of. Then he shakes his head, and raises his hands to sign again.

'Are you okay?'

Warriors sighs. "You're too perceptive," he remarks, and Wild sticks his tongue out playfully.

"I am alright... there's just someone I need to talk to, at the castle, and I'm a little nervous," he admits.

Wild's eyes sparkle. 'Talk, or confess?' he asks, and makes a heart with his thumbs and index fingers.

Warriors' cheeks are burning. "Am I *that* obvious?"

Wild simply raises an eyebrow, and looks at the captain expectantly.

"You little sprite," he grumbles, "Don't say a word of this to the others, okay?"

'My lips are always sealed,' Wild smiles.

"You know what I mean!"

Wild laughs, light and joyful, the sound bringing warmth to his companions. He has an odd laugh, but a pleasant one, and it never ceases to put Warriors back into a good mood. He's still nervous, about what he has to say, but he feels a little better than before.

After all, he thinks, glancing back over his shoulder, *my brother did it, so I can too.*

It's definitely weird to see Mask - *Time* - grown-up and married, but Warriors is very happy for him - of course he is! His brother certainly has more sense, falling for a strong, steady, kind-hearted farmgirl, rather than *literal royalty.*

He wonders how *she* will react, to seeing Time.

He wonders how *she* will react, to what Warriors needs to say.

Soon, the heroes arrive at the castle, and are greeted by a dozen guards. Warriors hears the familiar *shing* of swords being drawn, so he quickly turns back to address the group.

"Relax. I've got this," he says confidently, partly to them, partly to himself.

"Alright, pretty boy," Legend remarks, but sheaths his sword.

Warriors pivots and steps forward to the guards, who immediately relax upon seeing him.

"Sir Link! You're back!" one guard exclaims.

"Welcome home Captain!"

"Who are these soldiers you travel with?"

Warriors smiles. "These are not soldiers, but heroes! And they are all very dear friends of mine. We would like to request an audience with Zel- ah, Her Majesty."

"I'm sure that will be of no issue."

Warriors grins as a very familiar woman walks past the guards, her giant's knife strapped firmly across her back.

"Impa!"

"Good to see you have returned, Link. Come on, Zelda will be happy to see you," she smiles.

Wild nudges Warriors' side, but the captain ignores him, not wanting to see the likely smug, teasing expression on the sprite's face.

The group follow Impa into the castle, Warriors trying his best to not show any sign of nerves. Everything around him feels so familiar, yet there are a few changes - namely, the increase in life, both from people & plants.

He's missing the repair - and regrowth - of this land, due to the current adventure, but there is joy in seeing the increase in progress, and not just the small, everyday changes.

Warriors' wandering thoughts are brought back together as Impa stops before the familiar doors of the throne room. He takes a deep breath, running his fingers over his scarf, smoothing the fabric and taking comfort in the familiar texture.

Then the doors open, and all he can see is *her*.

She has traded her armour for a traditional gown, a deep, reddish-purple that glistens slightly in the light. The skirt of the dress flares out as she stands, and the dark trim on the sleeves hugs her slender arms as she clasps her hands together in front of them. Her lips turn up in a gentle smile, and he blushes as he realises he's just been standing there and staring. Quickly he drops down to one knee and bows his head.

"Your Majesty," he says, by way of greeting.

"No need for formalities, Link," Artemis responds, and she's *right there*, one hand cupping under his chin to raise his head, the other wrapping around his arm, ready to pull him to his feet.

Their eyes meet, blue on blue, and he's melting inside whilst trying desperately to stop the blood from rushing to his cheeks.

"I assume you're all in need of food, and a good rest?" she says, once they're standing again.

Warriors nods quickly.

"That would be lovely," Time adds, "We also would like to know if there's any increased monster activity around."

Artemis sighs. "Unfortunately, yes. Nothing much, just some reports of a few camps. We've seen a lot of monsters, across all eras, but there's descriptions of some that even Impa does not recognise."

"We'll deal with them," states Time.

"Tomorrow," Twilight adds quickly, giving his mentor a pointed look.

"Are you sure?" Artemis asks, frowning slightly.

Time smiles. "Positive. I've seen more monster types than anyone else - especially due to this newest quest. And I don't want to see this kingdom overrun by monsters again."

Warriors finally tears his gaze from Artemis, to face Time, who has paled a little after his slip.

"Again?" she echoes.

Impa steps closer, scrutinising him, then she grins. "Well, not so little are you now, squirt?"

"Wait - *Mask*?" the queen gasps.

His smile returns. "I go by Time now."

"Like *that's* any better," someone - probably Legend - mutters.

To everyone's surprise, Artemis surges forward and embraces Time, who awkwardly returns the hug, after a moment's hesitation.

"You've grown so much! And-" she pulls back and grabs his left hand, "this - you found a place to be happy, didn't you?"

Time nods, and the expression on his face is so bashful, so *Mask*, that it makes Warriors' chest ache.

"Yes, I am happy," he says softly.

"He married the farmgirl that we used to tease him about," Warriors adds.

"Really? Well done!" Artemis' smile is so bright, and though it is directed at Time, it still warms Warriors' heart.

After a little more small talk, and introducing her to all the heroes, Artemis leads the group through to the large dining room. Everything is sparkly and clean, and Warriors isn't the only one who's worrying about the muck on their clothes.

Hylia, he is *nothing* next to Artemis. She practically glides across the floor, her steps silent due to her stealth training, with the grace of royalty and the stance of a warrior. Whereas his steps are heavy, his clothes dirty and patchy in places, and he is in need of a bath. He's let himself get so *dishevelled*, and it's *embarrassing*.

Warriors wants to sit next to her, but he's not confident enough, so he settles between Legend and Wild instead.

Time sits beside Impa, reminiscing on their time in the war, and Sky ends up taking the seat beside Artemis, happily regaling tales of Skyloft. The atmosphere is warm, full of chatter that continues even when food is placed before them, with some of the heroes demonstrating that they have no table manners whatsoever. However, Warriors keeps rather quiet, just focuses on eating and *not* catching Artemis' eyes across the table.

I'll talk to her tomorrow, after we've dealt with the monsters. Job first. Life afterwards, he decides.

He could spend the night in his own room, but Warriors decides to stay with the other heroes, in a large guest room. No-one wants to admit it, but they've all become rather clingy, and it is most obvious when sleeping. Time and Twilight push the beds together without even being asked, and the heroes all climb onto what is now one gigantic bed.

Hyrule and Legend cuddle up, as do Four and Sky. Wind snuggles next to Sky as well, despite usually being Warriors' cuddle buddy. The captain starts to think that maybe he should've gone to his own room, after all, when Wild taps him on the shoulder.

'Sleep?' he signs, with a questioning expression, and gestures to where Time has laid down beside Twilight.

Warriors frowns, confused. Wild usually cuddles up with both Time and Twilight, why is he hesitating?

The younger hero huffs and pulls Warriors onto the bed, then wraps his arms around the captain before he can protest.

Oh. Wild wants to cuddle with *him* tonight.

Warriors shifts to let his scarf spread across them both, and Wild latches onto it, burying his face in the soft fabric as he cuddles further into Warriors. The captain smiles and relaxes, closing his eyes and letting his worries fade away for the night.

Morning comes far too quickly, and the heroes begin their daily task of untangling blankets and limbs. Legend is first off the beds, but not before Warriors saw how he'd moved in the night and had woken up with his head in Twilight's lap, and Four and Hyrule cuddled up to him. Warriors hasn't moved much himself, but Wild is completely wrapped in his scarf, having pulled it off Warriors' neck in the night. The hero has his head tilted back in a silent snore, and Warriors doesn't want to wake him, not yet.

Soon everyone is awake and pulling on their various outergarments and armour, all except for Sky and Wild, who are still fast asleep.

"I don't want to wake them," Twilight sighs, a soft expression on his face.

"Eh, Sky sleeps too much," Legend says, and pulls the scarf without warning. Wild yelps as the fabric unwinds and sends him careening into Sky, waking them both up abruptly.

Sky groans and shoves Wild off him, then blinks sleepily at the other heroes.

"Ugh, why did you let me sleep in? We have stuff to do," he mutters groggily, and slowly gets off the bed. Time hands Sky his tunic and various armour, whilst Twilight fusses over

Wild. The younger just glares and waves his hands dismissively, grabbing his sheikah slate and tapping on a few icons, to summon his clothes. Today, he chooses to wear a dyed red hylian tunic, along with grey trousers and his amber earrings.

Warriors gathers up his scarf and drapes it around his neck, and by that point all the heroes are ready, even Sky. They head back down to the dining hall, to eat a hearty breakfast, and prepare for tackling the monster camps.

"We should investigate this one here, it's the largest," Time says, pointing to a mark on the map, about halfway between the castle and the Temple of Souls.

"It's also the farthest," Warriors points out, "Wouldn't it be better to start with these two? They're smaller, and we can reach them after only an hour's walk. We'll have a lot more energy then."

"I see you haven't lost your touch, Captain," Impa remarks, entering the room with Artemis.

Warriors blushes. "Ah, thank you," he says awkwardly.

Impa just grins, then comes over to examine the map herself.

"Yes, Link - sorry, *Warriors* is right. If you can take out the smaller camps, then report back so our soldiers know what we're dealing with. Then, we can march on the larger monster camp, without having to deal with these smaller ones on the way."

"That settles it, then," Time nods.

The heroes all stand and gather their weapons, ready as always to leave at a moment's notice. Just before they go, Artemis grabs Warriors' arm, and the captain freezes, his heart pounding faster.

For a moment, they stare at each other, then a light blush dances over the queen's cheeks.

"Be careful," she whispers.

"I will," he promises.

And when I return, I'll tell you how I feel.

Warriors signals to the heroes to wait, as the first of the monster camps draws into sight.

"Twilight, scout ahead," he whispers, "Then come straight back, don't engage."

The hylian nods, and moves forward with the stealth of a predator. Warriors crouches down, and the other heroes copy him. Nervous hands rest on swords and tap on their hilts - or in Wild's case, he's fiddling with the strings of his bow. Warriors knows that Wild has the most experience with camps such as these, but if he sent the younger out to scout, Wild would simply wait for the perfect opportunity to strike and take down the camp himself. The captain doesn't doubt Wild's ability, but he expects these monsters to be a combination of the worst from their worlds. And they're a team now; they have to work together.

Twilight doesn't take long to return, and his expression is grim.

"The camp may be small, but the monsters aren't. There's a couple of aeralfos, large moblins, and a pair of large dodongos."

"That's not so bad-"

"And six lynels."

Everyone stiffens, apart from Wild.

'Colour?' he asks, his expression determined.

"Two whites, two silver, and two gold," Twilight sighs, running a hand through his hair, "I don't think we can do it. We can't just focus on the lynels, there's the others as well."

Wild shakes his head. 'We can!'

Warriors glances around the group, checking how armed everyone is.

"Listen," he says, "The moblins can be taken out with arrows. Maybe the aeralfos too. And dodongos are defeated by bombs, so we can take them out quick. We'll split into three teams. Wind and Four, you can take out the dodongos. Wild, Legend, and Twilight - get as high as you can, and use your bows to sort out the moblins. Twilight, be prepared with your clawshot to bring the aeralfos down, if bows won't do it. Once you've killed them, you three can join the rest of us in taking down the lynels."

"But that leaves just four of us against the six lynels," Sky points out, unable to hide his worry.

"Only for a few minutes, and we're best with our swords," Warriors answers confidently. Truthfully, he is worried as well, but he has to have faith in his comrades - his *friends*.

The odds are against them, but then, when are they not?

With the talking over - as brief as it always is, with these heroes - they ready their weapons and split up as planned. The trio of archers set off first, all taking different angles, with Legend staying on the ground whilst Twilight and Wild climb the nearby trees.

"Follow me," Warriors commands, then draws his sword and walks straight into the camp. Time is to his left, Sky to his right, and Hyrule follows just behind.

Immediately all the monsters turn and stare at them, nostrils flaring, eyes narrowing. A few seconds pass in which the two groups stare at each other, then the monsters surge into action, grabbing weapons and charging with feral cries. The moblins shriek as they are taken down with multiple arrows, striking their heads and weak points in armour. The two smallest heroes use the distraction to run around to where the dodongos are, and bring out their bombs, both looking far too excited for this fight.

Warriors focuses his attention on the lynels, their biggest enemies in terms of both strength and size. The whites and silvers move forward to engage, but the golds hang back, almost lazily. The odds have evened so they're one-on-one, and Warriors steps forward to face the silvers with Sky, whilst Time and Hyrule stand against the whites.

He twirls his white sword, goading the silver lynel, and smiles as it charges with a roar. At the last second, Warriors backflips to avoid its blade, then swings his sword around and slashes at the lynel's legs. It shrieks and pivots, ready for another charge. He lets it come, and repeats the same technique, three times, until the lynel's front legs are bleeding heavily and it stumbles on them. Taking advantage

of this new weakness, Warriors valts onto the monster's back and plunges his sword between its shoulder blades. The lynel roars and bucks, trying to dislodge him, but he holds on tight to the sword's hilt, and pushes it in as deep as he can. Despite the internal damage, the lynel still bucks and fights, and Warriors is wondering *how* he's going to pull his sword out when something explodes against the lynel's face. The beast screams and falls, sending Warriors tumbling off as well, his grip on his sword loosening. As he scrambles back up, he sees the lynel dissolve into purple mist, and across the camp, Wild waves cheerily with a bow in one hand, and bomb arrows in the other.

The captain smiles then notices that the golden lynels have geared up and look ready to join the fight. A quick glance around shows that Sky and Time have both killed their opponents, and the latter is helping Hyrule with the fourth lynel.

"Sky! With me!" Warriors yells, running forwards and stopping only to grab his sword from the pile of guts and horns that was once the mighty lynel. He doesn't check to see if the chosen hero is following, his sole focus on the lynels that are readying their bows. Electricity sparks on the tips of their arrows, and Warriors curses and ducks as three shoot towards him. Across the camp, Time cries out as the other gold's arrows hit his armour, sending shocks through the metal that reduce him to his knees. With a furious yell, Hyrule brings down the remaining white lynel, then rushes to assist Time.

He's okay. My brother will be okay, Warriors tells himself, *Now focus, soldier. Focus.*

The golden lynel takes aim at Time again, so Warriors grabs his fire rod and releases a torrent of flames that batter the

beast. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Sky circling the other lynel, Wind and Four running over to assist as the dodongos have been destroyed.

The flames die down, and the lynel roars, eyes glinting as it locks onto Warriors. With dismay the Captain sees there's no sign of injury from the fire; he's only made it angrier. He tightens his grip on his weapons, sword in one hand, fire rod in the other.

It's okay. I can do this.

Just as he braces himself for the attack, an arrow tipped in ice strikes the lynel's nose. It roars and turns, knocking Warriors over with its tail as it stares down the culprit.

"Wild!" Warriors yells, "Move! What are you *doing*?"

The sprite just grins then readies his bow, a fire arrow in place this time. Warriors stares as Wild shoots the grass, the burning vegetation causing a blast of hot air, which he uses his paraglider to rise up and above the lynel. Then Wild takes his bow again, and time almost seems to slow as he fires multiple arrows at the lynel, switching between fire and ice. The beast is stunned by the multiple hits to its face, so Warriors seizes the opportunity and sprints forward, swinging his sword and slashing as its legs. As he attacks, Wild lands gracefully, and quickly changes his bow for a hefty claymore before darting over and *jumping* onto the lynel.

Warriors wants to yell at him for the stupidity of the move… but he *did* do so himself, with the silver.

The lynel recovers far too quickly, and Warriors doesn't move fast enough, the beast's blade catching him on his right arm. It's not a deep cut, but it stings, and the warm

liquid trickles out and soaks his sleeve. He hisses and jumps back, sword raised and ready again, then freezes and stares as Wild clings desperately to the lynel's mane. His claymore is discarded, unable to strike it in before the lynel recovered, and the beast bucks furiously, trying to dislodge the hero.

Warriors tightens his grip on his sword, and runs towards the lynel with a yell.

He meets the beast head-on, white sword clashing with the lynel's massive blade, and has to drop his fire rod and use both hands to brace against the force of the lynel's attack.

"Wild! Get down!" Warriors shouts, as his feet start to slip.

The lynel's eyes narrow, and it pulls back suddenly, twisting and kicking up its back legs, finally dislodging Wild. The hero goes flying, and lands not too far away with an audible crack sounding. Then the beast turns back, something akin to a smile on its face.

Warriors sees red.

"You *bastard!*" he growls, and swings his sword hard. It grazes the monster's chest, and it roars, a giant hand swatting Warriors away like he is an insignificant knat. The captain hisses as he hits the ground, but is soon on his feet again, and twirls his sword then launches in to another attack. Blades clash, his sword sparking as the battle fuels his magic, and Warriors breaks away after the next attack, sword extended behind him. With a fierce yell, he spins, and his sword sings as the magic is released, tearing through the monster's front legs. Breathing heavily, Warriors flips his scarf over his shoulder and watches in grim satisfaction as the golden lynel shrieks and collapses, two bloodied stumps where its forelegs used to be.

"Wow. Good job, Captain," Sky remarks, jogging over.

Warriors turns to face him, immediately noticing the blood splatters on his tunic, and the large bruise blossoming on his cheek.

"Are you alright? Where's the other gold lynel?"

Sky shrugs. "It ran away. Aren't you going to finish that one off? It's suffering."

"No... You can finish it," Warriors says, stepping away before Sky can respond. The captain surveys the ruined monster camp, now just another battlefield, taking note of all the monster remains and discarded weapons that are scattered around. It seems that no other enemies have survived, all vanquished by the team of heroes. He's relieved to see Time standing, only a little pale, and talking to Wind, who seems uninjured. Hyrule is fussing over Four, and Legend hovers nearby with a couple of potions. Twilight stands near them, and Wild -

Wild isn't there.

Warriors pivots, heart pounding as his eyes race over the battlefield, pausing on Wild's prone form before darting up to the golden monster.

The other lynel didn't run away; it retreated.

And now, it has set its sight on its target.

Warriors doesn't think; he *runs*, sprinting as fast as he can across the destroyed camp, as the lynel charges as well. Wild is struggling to his feet, but he won't move quick enough - the lynel is gaining, jagged spear in hand, bearing

down on its target, and Warriors leans forward as he tries to move faster, faster, he has to be faster -

Something slams into him, and Warriors is thrown aside, tumbling through the grass. Pain shoots through his torso and head, but he ignores it all, struggling back up to his feet. The lynel is in front of him, stunned and weaponless.

Warriors staggers forward, and plunges his sword into the monster's neck.

It coughs and splutters, blood oozing from the wound, before it falls, and turns to smoke like the rest of its kin. The white sword clatters to the ground, and Warriors follows, his knees hitting the earth before he even realised he'd lost his balance. Scarred hands wrap around his, and he raises his head, blue eyes meeting a frantic turquoise.

"Wild," he murmurs, and why does it *hurt* to speak? But the sprite is okay, the lynel is dead, everything is okay...

Wild is crying and signing something, but Warriors can't focus on the movements. He can't focus on *anything*, his vision growing blurry as the ground beneath him gets damper.

"Somethin's wrong," he slurs, then finally looks down.

Oh. A giant spear in his gut would certainly do it.

He blinks, and he's on his back - *when did that happen* - a couple of familiar faces gazing down at him even as their features continue to blur.

"Hold on, Warriors. Hold on," someone urges.

"Mask," he whispers, memories coming forth, of his little brother, the soldiers they fought with, and *her*...

"Mask," he rasps again, "You... have to tell her... Tell Artemis, I... I lo-"

"You can tell her yourself," Mask tries to speak firmly, but his voice cracks.

"I love her," Warriors breathes.

Then his chest tightens, and the world spirals into darkness.

And it stays dark for a while.

Sounds come back on occasion, but he cannot comprehend words, and the world remains as black as the cloudy night sky.

He drifts, and thinks it would be so very easy to sink, to let the darkness swallow him completely.

But he has *never* been one for choosing the easy path, and he has so much - so many *people* - to live for.

He stops drifting, and he starts swimming, kicking fiercely for the surface. There is a light ahead, he can see it now, and warmth, but also pain. Nothing will deter him though; he kicks harder, and the light grows, reaching down to grab him and pull him out.

Warriors gasps, and the light embraces him softly, filling his vision with an amber glow. He blinks, and sees torches on the wall, bathing him in the gentle flames. Blinks again, and turns his head slightly, to the person sat beside him, a hand

clasped in his. Blinks once more, but the image doesn't change - it's *her.*

Artemis.

Gently, he squeezes her hand, and smiles as she sits up with a gasp, her hair uncharacteristically messy, and face devoid of makeup.

"Link!" she exclaims.

"Hey, Zel," he rasps.

"Thank the goddess you're okay!" She leans forward and hugs him, but he winces at the spike of pain in his chest.

"What happened?"

She pulls back and frowns slightly. "You don't remember?"

He shakes his head; unfortunately, he can remember everything that happened up to and including being impaled, but he wants to know what happened when he was unconscious.

"What happened when I was out?" he clarifies, then adds, "And for how long?"

She sighs, her blue eyes shimmering with her concern. "You've been asleep for four days. After… after they brought you back, not much has happened. We've all been waiting for you to wake up. One of the young ones - Hyrule, I think - he's been helping to heal you, and the pink-haired one, he almost used the whole of our stock of red potions on you."

Warriors frowns. "Legend…used the whole stock?"

"We were running low anyway. Don't worry, we're already replenishing the stock," Artemis reassures him, "But you... you were badly wounded, Link."

He opens his mouth - to apologise, to say *something*, he's not sure - but then the door to the room bursts open, and a familiar scarred hero storms in.

'You idiot!' Wild signs furiously, 'You almost died!'

"You're okay," Warriors breathes.

Wild shakes his head. 'No! I am not!'

"You're still hurt? You should be resting-"

Wild claps his hands together, silencing the captain. 'Why did you do that? We nearly lost you!' His hands move quickly and firmly, but they're beginning to tremble.

"I did it to save you, Wild," Warriors answers softly.

'I was fine.'

"You weren't going to get out of the way fast enough! I - I had to-" he breaks off into a coughing fit, and grimaces as the motion shoots pain through his healing wound.

"Link, careful!" Artemis cries.

Warriors manages to stop the coughing, and locks eyes with Wild, raising his hands to sign. It's sloppy and awkward, he's unpracticed, but he manages to convey what he wants.

'You. Brother. I love you.'

Wild's eyes widen. 'Not worth it,' he signs.

"No!" Warriors exclaims, "You *are* worth it, Wild!"

Tears blossom in the younger's eyes. 'Can't have anyone else die for me.'

"I didn't die for you-"

"But you almost did," Artemis interrupts gently, "When they brought you back, you'd lost so much blood - I... I didn't know if you would make it," she whispers the last sentence, her hand shaking as he takes hold of it again.

"But I'm here now. I'm okay," he says, looking first at Wild, and then to Artemis, "And you know I'd gladly take a hit for you - *both* of you, anyday."

Wild huffs, but he's smiling, and he reaches over to take Warriors' other hand.

They stay like that for a moment, the three of them close and holding on tight to each other, and Warriors thinks this would only be better if his other new friends were here too. He's with two of the people he loves the most, and he cherishes the silent sweetness of this.

And he means what he said; he'll take a hit for them, for *any* of his friends, like he did in the last fight, like he will do again. Because of this, he thinks it would be unfair to tell Artemis the truth.

But it is for that reason that he must. He cannot go into another battle with her not knowing.

"Is he awake?"

Warriors raises his head and smiles when he sees Time standing in the doorway.

"Well that answers my question," Time continues, also smiling, "How are you feeling?"

"I'm alright," he answers truthfully, "Happy, now I see you're okay as well."

"Of course the old man's fine, he didn't take a spear to the chest. Unlike you, pretty-faced idiot," Legend remarks, standing just behind Time, his arms crossed and the usual scowl on his face.

"Move, I've got potions."

"I don't need anything more," Warriors starts to protest, but Wild waves at him and signs to be quiet.

"Yes, you do," Legend argues.

"I really don't-"

"Quiet!"

Artemis' regal tone echoes through the small room, and they all freeze.

"Thank you," she sighs, "Now, Warriors just woke up, and I think he needs to rest. So if you could leave us be, for now, and you can come back and administer the potion when he's a little more rested," Artemis looks rather pointedly at Legend.

"Alright, fine," the veteran huffs, but there is only concern in his eyes, no real irritation.

"Rest well, big brother," Time says gently.

'Don't do anything more stupid,' Wild adds.

"Yes, yes," Warriors smiles, keeping his expression bright, but once they've gone he slumps back against the pillows. suddenly exhausted. He wants to see the others so bad, but he's very tired still.

And he needs to talk to Artemis - he *has* to tell her, he can't keep delaying this - but sleep reaches up and drags him down, before he can start the conversation.

He wakes, and she is still by his side, though her clothes have changed and her blonde hair is neatly plaited back. She hasn't noticed him, so he takes a moment to drink in her beauty, before she turns and sees his eyes are open.

"Hello again, Link," she smiles, so breathtaking.

"We need to talk," he blurts out.

She frowns a little. "We do, yes, but now not, you've only just woken up again-"

"I'm awake," he says, and gingerly pushes himself more upright, ignoring the twinges of pain.

Artemis sighs. "Alright, you first."

"No, you."

"You're not going to like what I have to say," she warns, and his heart sinks, but he gestures for her to continue.

"Link, you have to be more careful! You don't need to take any hits for me, no matter what you said yesterday. I don't want you doing that. I didn't want it in the war, and I don't want it today. It's bad enough that I can't come with you,

and I have to stay here and wait for you to return! But when you do come back, and you're bleeding and I can't actually *see* you for all the blood-" she breaks off, a hand flying to her lips as she tries to stifle the sobs.

"Zel," Warriors whispers, and reaches over to take her hand, "Zel, Arty… I'm sorry. I didn't think of it like that."

"I know, I know because you're so selfless… but I don't want you coming back broken. Don't do that to me, Link. Please."

Her cheeks are damp, streaked with tears that he didn't think she'd cry over him. Gently he wipes them with his thumb, his heartbeat accelerating as she leans into the touch.

"I want to come back to you," he says, "When this is over, I want to come back and I want to *stay*. I want to stand by your side and help to rebuild this kingdom. But I don't want to return without doing all I can to save them. I can't lose them, and I won't lose myself either."

"I know, I know that you're so capable - you just scared me. You really scared me," she admits, "I don't want to lose you."

"And I don't want to go." He looks at their clasped hands, and brings them closer to his chest.

"Zelda, my comrade, my queen… I confess that when I return, I don't just want to stay and help you. I want to stay and *be* with you."

She gasps, but he continues, "I should've told you sooner, so many times before I nearly have, but I can't leave without saying this to you now. I love you, Arty. And I want to stay by your side, for as long as you'll have me."

His heart is pounding, blood rushing to his cheeks, and a moment passes before she suddenly throws her arms around him.

"I love you too," she cries, "so yes, I want you to stay. Please, Link, stay."

"I will, once this current quest is over. I promise you," he whispers.

She pulls back, mindful of his injuries, as a loud whistle splits the air. Warriors turns to see Wild and Wind standing in the doorway, both grinning like the mischievous teenagers they are.

'Nice catch,' Wild signs cheekily.

"Wild!" Warriors exclaims. The sprite just laughs and jogs over, his smile warm as he observes their clasped hands. Wind darts over too, and that causes a sudden invasion of heroes, as the rest of their gang file in as well. Legend and Hyrule start moving to check Warriors' bandages, but a slightly flustered Artemis demands they give them some space. It's impossible, though, with ten of them crowded in the small room.

Warriors squeezes Artemis' hand, and she relaxes a little, seeing his happiness at being around the others again. Everyone he loves and cherishes is here - his brothers, and his queen. They make up his world, as strange as it is, and he'll do anything for each and every one of them.

He'll gladly take an arrow, a sword, a spear for them.

And he'll fight even harder to return back to them afterwards.

Author's Note:

Thank you so much for reading!!

I hope you enjoyed this! :3